



Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Demand and Uses

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN HAS 5.11 HOURS OF LEISURE TIME PER DAY. ABOUT THREE-QUARTERS OF THAT TIME IS SPENT IN FRONT OF A TV WITH THE REMAINDER—1.70 HOURS—SPENT ON SPORTS, EXERCISE, AND RECREATION (BRADLEY, 2005). GIVEN THE SMALL AMOUNT OF TIME MOST AMERICANS DEVOTE TO RECREATION, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT RECREATION PLANNERS UNDERSTAND RECREATION DEMAND—THE FACTORS THAT CAUSE A PERSON TO PARTICIPATE IN A PARTICULAR RECREATIONAL USE.



Overview

Through previous research in the field of recreation, it has become evident that people who share an interest in one recreation activity or setting often share interests in others. For example, individuals who participate in one form of water-based outdoor recreation are also likely to participate in other types of water-based outdoor recreation. This chapter explores several of the factors that influence a person's recreation preferences—recreation settings, recreation experiences, and geographic location—and classifies recreational activities and users according to these groupings.

While important, recreation preferences are only one component of recreation participation. Barriers to recreation are another important consideration in determining how often and to what extent people recreate. This chapter explores three primary recreation barriers—personal, environmental, and disabled accessibility—to determine to what extent these barriers influence and shape recreation within the state.



Recreation participation rates within Wisconsin are higher than most other regions of the country. This may be attributed to the combination of Wisconsin's abundant recreation resources and the state's four season climate.

Recreation Demand Survey Methods

Recreation demand survey methods for this SCORP relied on four survey sources: 1) The 1999-2004 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) and version 18 of the NSRE (called the Wisconsin Survey), which was conducted September to November, 2004; 2) The Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF) 2002 Outdoor Recreation Participation & Spending Study, A State-by-State Perspective; 3) The Department of Tourism 2004 Wisconsin Advertising Awareness and Competitive Analysis Wave VIII Study (WAVE VIII) ; and 4) comments (both written, internet, and mail) from a series of eight public meetings held in 2005 discussing barriers for increased outdoor use. Total sample sizes for each survey ranged from approximately 300-2,900 completed surveys. Results from each survey focus on Wisconsin residents or visitors who have recreated in Wisconsin. Further discussion of methods and techniques used in these studies can be found in Appendix C—Outdoor Recreation Demand Survey Methodology.

The Mass Markets in Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation

Wisconsinites are active participants in most forms of outdoor recreation. Recreation participation rates within Wisconsin are higher than most other regions of the country. This may be attributed to the combination of Wisconsin's abundant recreation resources as well as the state's four season climate, a resource that allows for recreating in every season. Table 2-1 lists all Wisconsin resident outdoor recreation activities surveyed for this SCORP. In total, 95 activities are presented from the NSRE and OIF studies—more than have been used in any previous Wisconsin SCORP.

Table 2-1: Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Participants by Activity (Age 16+)

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Walk for pleasure	85.8	3,567
Family gathering	78.9	3,280
View/photograph natural scenery	67.5	2,806
Gardening or landscaping for pleasure	65.3	2,715
Visit nature centers, etc.	65.3	2,715
Driving for pleasure	60.3	2,507
View/photograph other wildlife	57.0	2,369
Attend outdoor sports events	56.9	2,365
Picnicking	56.6	2,353
Sightseeing	55.3	2,299
View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.	50.0	2,079
Bicycling	49.3	2,049
Visit a beach	47.3	1,966
Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	45.8	1,904
Visit historic sites	45.2	1,879
Yard games, e.g., horseshoes	44.8	1,862
View/photograph birds	40.9	1,700
Fishing – freshwater	40.7	1,692
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	39.5	1,642
Attend outdoor concerts, plays, etc.	38.5	1,600
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	38.3	1,592
Swimming in an outdoor pool	38.3	1,592
Visit outdoor theme/water park	37.6	1,563
Fishing – warmwater	37.0	1,538
Motorboating	36.4	1,513
Day hiking	35.0	1,455
Camping – developed	32.3	1,343
Visit a farm or agricultural setting	31.8	1,322
Running or jogging	29.4	1,222
Sledding	29.3	1,218
View/photograph fish	28.1	1,168
Visit other waterside (besides beach)	26.4	1,097
Golf	25.9	1,077
Off-road driving with an ATV	23.4	973
Canoeing	20.5	852
Mountain biking (off-road)	20.4	848
Target shooting	20.2	840
Inline skating	20.0	831
Visit prehistoric/archeological sites	19.4	806
Hunting – big game	19.2	798
Trail running	18.6	773
Snowmobiling	18.3	761
Mountain biking (single track)	18.0	748
Off-road 4-wheel driving (SUV)	17.7	736
Ice skating outdoors	16.6	690
Nature-based educational programs	16.3	678
Camping – primitive	16.0	665
Volleyball outdoors	14.8	615

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Hunting – small game	14.5	603
Rafting	14.4	599
Fishing – coldwater	13.9	578
Visit a dog park to walk a pet	12.4	515
Tennis outdoors	12.3	511
Waterskiing	12.2	507
Basketball outdoors	11.6	482
Boat tours or excursions	11.5	478
Skiing – cross-country	11.4	474
Fishing – ice	11.4	474
Fishing – Great Lakes	11.0	457
Hunting – upland birds	10.5	436
Rowing	10.1	420
Softball	10.1	420
Horseback riding (any type)	9.8	407
Soccer outdoors	9.8	407
Use personal watercraft	9.7	403
Skiing – downhill	9.7	403
Disc golf	8.8	366
Horseback riding on trails	8.1	337
Snowshoeing	8.0	333
Snorkeling	7.7	320
Baseball	7.0	291
Football	7.0	291
Backpacking	6.9	287
Paintball games	6.6	274
Rock climbing	5.9	245
Off-road motorcycling	5.9	245
Hunting – migratory bird	5.0	208
Handball or racquetball outdoors	5.0	208
Sailing	4.9	204
Fishing – fly	4.8	199
Snowboarding	4.7	195
Ice hockey outdoors	4.0	166
Mountain climbing	3.4	141
Orienteering	2.7	112
Skateboarding	2.6	108
Kayaking – recreation/sit-on-top	2.4	99
Skiing – telemark	2.4	99
Geocaching	2.0	83
Kayaking – whitewater	1.8	75
Caving	1.6	67
Scuba diving	1.3	54
Dog sledding	1.1	46
Windsurfing	0.7	29
Surfing	0.3	12
Kayaking – touring/sea	0.2	8

Wisconsin Demand Use Highlights

ATVing

Within Wisconsin, ATVing has been one of the fastest growing recreation activities. What started in the 1970s as a small sport has now grown into a multimillion dollar industry with devoted participants across the country. With its abundance of undeveloped land, Wisconsin has proved an ideal location for ATVing; over 23% of Wisconsinites currently participate in ATV recreation and more are riding every year. For many ATV enthusiasts their sport is a social activity—they ride with their friends and families, stopping to shop and eat at different towns along the way. A number of ATV clubs and their members are active in group outings, performing trail maintenance, and promoting vehicle safety and advocacy. For other riders, ATVing is a nature-based activity. These users value the time they spend outside while on their ATVs, the fresh air and peaceful atmosphere they experience riding on a rural trail.



Though increasingly popular, the rise in ATV usage has not been without growing pains. Those objecting to ATVs have continually raised complaints about the noise and displacement of other recreational uses caused by the vehicles. Though the motorsports industry and a number of ATV clubs have addressed these issues with some limited successes in the state, there is still much work to be done to ensure ATVs interact peacefully with other motorized and non-motorized recreational activities.

Geocaching

Most Wisconsinites have probably never heard of geocaching. For those that participate in the sport, though, it represents a new and exciting form of ultra-modern, technologically advanced recreation. Geocaching may be described as a modern day treasure hunt. The sport relies on Global



Positioning System (GPS) units, small devices that are able to determine, within 6-20 feet, the location of any spot on the planet. With these devices in hand, geocachers set out to find caches—small treasures set up and maintained by a worldwide network of individuals and organizations. The location of a cache is

posted on the internet so geocachers need only record the location (in latitude and longitude) of their treasure and set out to find it. Though the sport sounds simple, it often involves a good deal of trekking and searching as geocachers make their way over hills and rocks, forests and streams to find their treasure. The location of a cache is up to the individual who establishes it, thus they are often placed somewhere the hider deems special—a scenic vista, a rocky cliff-face, even the bottom of a shallow lake. Upon arriving at a cache—generally a small

bag containing trinkets and a logbook—the visitor takes a treasure, leaves a treasure, and records his visit in the book. He then replaces the cache and returns home, ready to start his next quest. Geocaching has become popular not only for its sense of adventure, but also its flexibility. Caches can be hidden anywhere—city streets, remote wilderness areas, suburban front yards. The rules, like the treasures in the caches themselves, are loose and adaptable, allowing geocachers to create traveling caches, group treasure hunts, and many other variations. As the sport gains more exposure from associations like the Wisconsin Geocaching Association (<http://www.wi-geocaching.com/>), it is expected to continue to increase in popularity.

Walking for Pleasure

Of all recreational activities offered in Wisconsin, walking for pleasure is by far the most popular, with over 85% of state residents (3.5 million people) participating. The reasons are obvious; walking is an easy, accessible activity requiring only your own two feet and a



good pair of shoes (sometimes those are even negotiable!). Walking can be done nearly anywhere, whether in the heart of downtown Milwaukee or in the most remote portion of northern Wisconsin. Walking is also a multitasker's dream, allowing us to sightsee, chat with friends, or simply enjoy the scenery as we stroll. As exercise becomes an increasing

concern for the Wisconsin population, walking can provide a good source of activity during a hectic workday just as easily as during a leisurely weekend outing.

Motorboating

In a state that is nearly surrounded by water—Lake Superior to the north, Lake Michigan to the east, the Mississippi River to the west, and thousands of smaller lakes and rivers in between—it is not surprising that watersports are popular among Wisconsinites. With 1,513,000 people (36% of the population) participating, motorboating is a favorite pastime of many state residents, and with good reason: Every one of our 72 counties has at least 4 lakes with the most—1,327

lakes—occurring in Vilas County. Our boat-to-resident ratio is the second in the nation with one boat for every nine residents (Minnesota is number one, with one boat for every six residents). Our state ranks 6th in the nation for boat registrations and 9th in the nation for money spent on boating and accessories. The many varieties of lakes within Wisconsin accommodate nearly every form of motorboat, from small runabouts to large Great Lake vessels. Because of its tremendous popularity, motorboating has sometimes been associated with issues of



Wisconsin Demand Use Highlights

overcrowding and safety. In reaction to these concerns, certain lakes have placed restrictions on the sport. As the powerboat industry continues to push for more affordable boating, the sport is expected to become increasingly popular, cementing its status as a favorite outdoor pursuit.

Outdoor Ice Skating

Although cold and sometimes dreary, Wisconsin's winter does provide state residents with a wide variety of winter recreation. With 16.6% of state residents participating, outdoor ice skating is an especially popular winter activity. Skating is available in nearly all parts of the state, whether in the highly developed outdoor rinks of urban areas



or the crystalline surfaces of frozen northern lakes. While ice skating appeals to all ages, the physical demands involved in the sport tend to attract a younger crowd. Among this demographic skating is done recreationally and competitively, ice skating being a popular activity, especially among girls. The cost of participation for ice skating is generally low, a quality that

has made the activity popular among families looking for an economical form of recreation. In recent years there has been a push to develop more outdoor ice skating rinks at the local level, a move that would make the activity accessible and popular to an even wider range of state residents.

Viewing/Photographing Birds

Viewing/photographing birds is an activity popular across all age groups and state regions—over 40% of Wisconsinites (1,700,000 people) participate in the activity. Unlike other forms of more active recreation, birdwatching is a uniquely serene pursuit—quiet, non-destructive, and based in a natural setting. Many birdwatchers value this natural aspect, enjoying the opportunity to be in the fields or woods, away from the noise and sometimes hectic pace of the city. Interestingly, most birdwatchers don't need to go far from home to find this peaceful atmosphere—85% birdwatch within 1 mile of where they live. Other birdwatchers value the educational aspect of the activity, taking the time to search for new species and learn the different behaviors, calls, and appearances of different birds. Birdwatching is often done as a family activity, making the sport a uniquely social way to spend time in nature. As the activity has become more popular, the state has begun to develop birdwatching trails. These trails often feature driving routes with stopping points to observe birds and other wildlife. These new trails are expected to further increase the popularity of birdwatching.



Disc Golf

Begun as a sport in the 1970s, disc golf has exploded in popularity. What started with a single course in Pasadena, California in 1975 has now expanded to a global phenomenon with courses on all continents but Africa, passionate players across the globe, and a professional sporting association, the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA). The rules of disk golf are much like traditional golf: get the disc to the target—an above ground, metal, net-like structure—in as few throws



as possible. The course is also very similar, with a fairway, terrain changes, and obstacles (trees, shrubs, water traps) all dotting the landscape of the typically 9 or 18 hole course. 8.8% of Wisconsinites (366,000 people) now participate in disc golf, with more joining these ranks every year. The sport is popular for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is

the ease in which it is played. A beginner at the sport needs only 3 discs (a driver, a mid-range, and a putter) and access to a course. Courses are found in most cities and entrance fees are generally low-cost or free. The sport itself is very friendly towards beginners as all players move from hole to hole at their own pace. Many participants play in groups and the sport provides a moderate amount of exercise and an opportunity to be outside.

Attending an Outdoor Sporting Event

You need not look further than your nearest cheesehead-stocked general store to know that sports are big in Wisconsin. Although only 20% of Wisconsinites participate in sports themselves, nearly 57% (2,365,000 people) watch or attend outdoor sporting events. Large events such as University of Wisconsin–Madison football games have ranked among the nation's top 20 in game attendance for each of the team's last nine seasons. Other events—football, soccer, and baseball games—are also popular year-round activities. Because they generally require developed facilities and large crowds, sporting events usually take place in larger cities, making them one of the few forms of recreation best suited for urban environments. While some skeptics may frown at the idea of classifying sporting event attendance as outdoor recreation, there are many side benefits from this activity. Those attending these events walk to the stadium and often tailgate—an outdoor activity and a chance to socialize with family, friends, and neighbors.



Outdoor Recreation Setting Segmentation

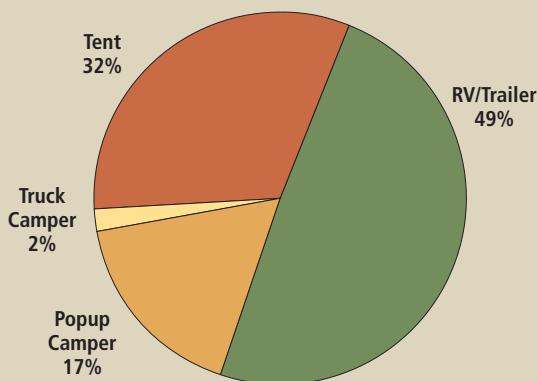
While the rankings shown in Table 2-1 are useful in determining which outdoor recreation activities are popular among Wisconsinites, it is also useful to understand what causes an activity to be popular. One method of examining outdoor recreation participation is by recreation setting—the environment in which people recreate. For the purpose of this plan, the NSRE and OIF recreational activities were divided into seven groupings describing different activity and setting trends. These groupings, listed below, suggest that people in different recreation setting segments seek different kinds of experiences from outdoor recreation. By understanding recreation use in terms of these segments, we may begin to see how individual recreational activities fit within a broader spectrum of recreational settings.

Segmentation of Outdoor Recreation Uses by Outdoor Resource Type / Setting:

- NATURE-BASED LAND
- DEVELOPED LAND
- WATER-BASED
- SNOW- AND ICE-BASED
- VIEWING AND LEARNING
- SPORTS – INDIVIDUAL
- SPORTS – TEAM



Wisconsin Camper Type



Nature-Based Land Activities

Nature-based land activities are those outdoor recreation activities that occur in undeveloped settings. While limited developed facilities may be used in conjunction with these activities, the typical nature-based land activity participant wants to experience natural surroundings. Visiting wilderness areas is the most popular nature-based land activity in Wisconsin with 38.3% of Wisconsinites participating. Hiking and camping are also popular with approximately one third of state residents participating in each. Other less popular nature-based land activities include rock climbing and geocaching. These activities involve more specialized, technical equipment and therefore appeal to a smaller demographic than other uses in this category.

Table 2-2: **Percent State Residents Participating in Wisconsin Nature-Based Land Activities (Age 16+)**

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	38.3	1,592
Day hiking	35.0	1,455
Camping – developed	32.3	1,343
Visit a farm or agricultural setting	31.8	1,322
Off-road driving with an ATV	23.4	973
Mountain biking (off-road)	20.4	848
Hunting – big game	19.2	798
Trail running	18.6	773
Mountain biking (single track)	18.0	748
Off-road 4-wheel driving (SUV)	17.7	736
Camping – primitive	16.0	665
Hunting – small game	14.5	603
Hunting – upland birds	10.5	436
Horseback riding on trails	8.1	337
Backpacking	6.9	287
Rock climbing	5.9	245
Off-road motorcycling	5.9	245
Hunting – migratory bird	5.0	208
Mountain climbing	3.4	141
Orienteering	2.7	112
Geocaching	2.0	83

Developed Land Setting Activities

Outdoor recreation in developed settings includes a wide mix of recreational activities, all of which use some form of manmade development (such as roads or side-walks) or involve a high level of social interaction. Developed land setting outdoor recreation is by far the most popular form of recreation in Wisconsin. More Wisconsin residents participate in two developed land recreation activities—walking for pleasure (85.8% participating) and outdoor family gatherings (78.9% participating)—than any other Wisconsin activities. Other activities in this category such as bicycling and picnicking are also favorites among Wisconsinites. Table 2-3 lists the percentage of Wisconsin residents participating in several popular developed land setting activities.

One of the more unique developed outdoor recreation uses is visiting an outdoor theme or water park. This use ranks in the top third of outdoor recreation activities in the state with over 37% of Wisconsinites participating. In Wisconsin, most of this use occurs in the Wisconsin Dells, a region containing some of the nation's top rated water parks. While summer usage has continued to grow, the water park season has also extended into the winter months with over 1 million visitors now flocking to the Dells to use its indoor water parks.

Water-Based Activities

Water-based outdoor activities are among the most popular recreational activities in Wisconsin. Abundant water resources across the state offer a wide variety of recreation options from high speed motorboating to lazy lounging at the beach. Just under half of Wisconsin residents participate in motorboating, visiting a beach, or swimming in a lake or stream. Residents of northwestern Wisconsin have the highest rates of participation in water-based activities, the clean and abundant waters of this region providing ample opportunities for water-based recreation. The Lake Michigan Coastal Regions and the Mississippi River Corridor Region, all of which provide many miles of shoreline for water-based participants, are also popular areas for water recreation.

Table 2-3: **Percent State Residents Participating in Wisconsin Developed Land Setting Activities (Age 16+)**

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Walk for pleasure	85.8	3,567
Family gathering	78.9	3,280
Gardening or landscaping for pleasure	65.3	2,715
Driving for pleasure	60.3	2,507
Picnicking	56.6	2,353
Bicycling	49.3	2,049
Yard games, e.g., horseshoes	44.8	1,862
Attend outdoor concerts, plays, etc.	38.5	1,600
Visit outdoor theme/water park	37.6	1,563
Target shooting	20.2	840
Visit a dog park to walk a pet	12.4	515
Horseback riding (any type)	9.8	407
Paintball games	6.6	274

Table 2-4: **Percent State Residents Participating in Wisconsin Water-Based Activities (Age 16+)**

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Visit a beach	47.3	1,966
Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	45.8	1,904
Fishing – freshwater	40.7	1,692
Swimming in an outdoor pool	38.3	1,592
Fishing – warmwater	37.0	1,538
Motorboating	36.4	1,513
Visit other waterside (besides beach)	26.4	1,097
Canoeing	20.5	852
Rafting	14.4	599
Fishing – coldwater	13.9	578
Waterskiing	12.2	507
Fishing – Great Lakes	11.0	457
Rowing	10.1	420
Use personal watercraft	9.7	403
Snorkeling	7.7	320
Sailing	4.9	204
Fishing – fly	4.8	199
Kayaking – recreation/sit-on-top	2.4	99
Kayaking – whitewater	1.8	75
Scuba diving	1.3	54
Windsurfing	0.7	29
Surfing	0.3	12
Kayaking – touring/sea	0.2	8

Snow- and Ice-Based Activities

Snow- and ice-based activities are those that involve some form of frozen water. These activities are very popular among Wisconsinites with just over 44% of state residents participating. Sledding is the most popular of these activities, with just over a quarter (29.3%) of the state participating. Ice related activities are also very popular in the state, with almost 700,000 Wisconsinites participating in ice skating and nearly 500,000 participating in ice fishing.

Viewing and Learning Activities

The primary focus of viewing and learning activities is the study of nature. Physical activity is not generally a primary component of these activities, although it is often a complementary component. Statewide, the most popular viewing and learning activity is viewing or photographing natural scenery, an activity in which 67% of Wisconsinites participate. The second most popular viewing and learning activity is visiting outdoor nature centers or zoos, with 65.3% of residents participating. Over half of all state residents have gone sightseeing within the last year, while just under half have visited historic sites. In general, rates of participation in viewing and learning activities are higher in Wisconsin than they are in other states. This may be a reflection of Wisconsin's strong educational system and history of environmental awareness.

Table 2-5: **Percent State Residents Participating in Wisconsin Snow- and Ice-Based Activities (Age 16+)**

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Sledding	29.3	1,218
Snowmobiling	18.3	761
Ice skating outdoors	16.6	690
Skiing – cross-country	11.4	474
Fishing – ice	11.4	474
Skiing – downhill	9.7	403
Snowshoeing	8.0	333
Snowboarding	4.7	195
Ice hockey outdoors	4.0	166
Skiing – telemark	2.4	99
Dog sledding	1.1	46

Table 2-6: **Percent State Residents Participating in Wisconsin Viewing and Learning Activities (Age 16+)**

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
View/photograph natural scenery	67.5	2,806
Visit nature centers, etc.	65.3	2,715
View/photograph other wildlife	57.0	2,369
Sightseeing	55.3	2,299
View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.	50.0	2,079
Visit historic sites	45.2	1,879
View/photograph birds	40.9	1,700
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	39.5	1,642
View/photograph fish	28.1	1,168
Visit prehistoric/archeological sites	19.4	806
Nature-based educational programs	16.3	678
Boat tours or excursions	11.5	478
Caving	1.6	67



Winter activities are very popular among Wisconsinites. Around 30% of state residents participate in snow sledding.

Individual Outdoor Sports Activities

Individual outdoor sports activities are those that involve some form of competition or require a built setting. Individual outdoor sports continue to be popular among Wisconsin residents, with nearly 30% running/jogging and over 25% playing golf. Urban residents are generally more likely to participate in individual outdoor sport activities than residents from suburban or rural regions. A notable exception to this trend is the significant number (29.8%) of suburban residents who inline skate.

Team Sports Activities

Team sports activities are those that involve some form of group competition and require a built setting. Participation in team sports has declined in recent years: less than 20% of Wisconsin residents indicate that they have participated in an outdoor team sports activity within the last year. While participation in team sports may be low, watching outdoor sporting events is very popular, with well over half of Wisconsin residents indicating that they have attended a sporting event within the past year.

Table 2-7: **Percent State Residents Participating in Wisconsin Individual Sports Activities (Age 16+)**

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Running or jogging	29.4	1,222
Golf	25.9	1,077
Inline skating	20.0	831
Tennis outdoors	12.3	511
Disc golf	8.8	366
Handball or racquetball outdoors	5.0	208
Skateboarding	2.6	108

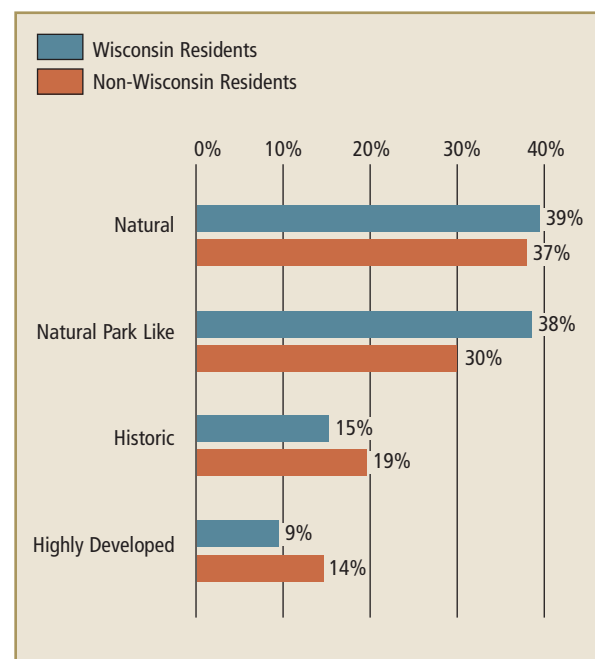
Table 2-8: **Percent State Residents Participating in Wisconsin Team Sports Activities (Age 16+)**

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Attend outdoor sports events	56.9	2,365
Volleyball outdoors	14.8	615
Basketball outdoors	11.6	482
Softball	10.1	420
Soccer outdoors	9.8	407
Baseball	7.0	291
Football	7.0	291

Preferences in Outdoor Recreation Settings

Outdoor recreation settings play a large role in understanding recreational activity preferences. Understanding both setting and activity preferences can help recreation managers and planners provide for a wide range of recreational opportunities within a given setting. In order to understand which Wisconsin environments are preferred for recreation, researchers used the NSRE and WAVE VIII studies. The NSRE study polled Wisconsin residents, asking which of four distinct environments they preferred as a recreational setting. The WAVE VIII study asked the same questions from non-residents. As Figure 2-1 illustrates, both Wisconsin and non-Wisconsin residents prefer natural and park-like settings over more developed settings. Though they prefer natural and park-like settings, non-Wisconsin residents show a higher preference for more developed settings than Wisconsin residents do.

Figure 2-1: **Outdoor Recreation Setting Preferences**



Outdoor Recreation Segmentation by Experiences

Another way of understanding recreation activity preferences is by understanding recreation experience preferences—the type of experience a person seeks from participating in a given recreational activity. As a population, Americans are a diverse group. People of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and backgrounds all combine to form a population with highly varied interests and activity preferences. When segmenting this population according to recreation participation, it becomes clear that the diversity of American society carries through to a diversity of recreational preferences. While some people enjoy high risk, adventure activities, others prefer more leisurely, safe activities like walking for pleasure and viewing natural scenery. In developing this plan, the WDNR and the NSRE developed a method of dividing the Wisconsin (and the United States) population into groups—called recreation experiences—with similar outdoor recreation interests.

The following recreation experience analysis identifies higher-than-average and lower-than-average participation rates across several different recreation activities. From this analysis it is clear that certain recreation activities and user groups are associated with other activities and user groups; people who participate in one type of recreation activity often participate in other related or similar activities. Each recreation experience, composed of many thousands of people, represents a very distinctive pattern of recreation participation. These patterns suggest that people in different segments seek different

kinds of experiences. Because different experiences require different marketing approaches, segments may need individualized marketing strategies to attract the maximum number of potential participants. Individuals may, however, be members of more than one segment, indicating that recreation participation is determined by a complex interaction of multiple interests and motivations.

NSRE survey data was used to examine people's preferences and participation in a range of outdoor recreational activities. From this data, several outdoor recreation participation segments were identified. The analysis for Wisconsin and the northern tier of states revealed eight segments named (although you may interpret and name them differently):

- INACTIVES
- PASSIVES
- NON-CONSUMPTIVE MODERATES
- NATURE LOVERS
- ACTIVE NATURE WATCHERS
- WATER BUGS
- MOTORIZED CONSUMPTIVES (HUNT AND FISH)
- ENTHUSIASTS



The diversity of American society carries through to a diversity of recreational preferences. While some people enjoy high risk, adventure activities, others prefer more leisurely, safe activities.



Inactives

About 17% of Wisconsinites 16 years and older (about 750,000 people) are characterized as “Inactives.” This is the largest and also the most sedentary group of all market segments. Members of this group participate in very few activities, especially those requiring physical exertion. Although members of this group do enjoy walking for pleasure and family gatherings, they participate in these activities far less often than the average person. Members may participate in some hunting and fishing, but participate in virtually no water sports.

Primary Inactives Activities:

- Walk for Pleasure
- Attend Family Gathering



Passives

About 14% of Wisconsinites 16 years and older (about 618,000 people) are characterized as “Passives.” This group is one of the most sedentary market segments with members participating in very few recreational activities, particularly those requiring physical exertion. Unlike most other segments, Passives do not often participate in viewing and photographing activities. Passives do enjoy moderate amounts of hiking and camping and also participate in family gatherings, visit nature centers, and visit historic centers.

Primary Passives Activities:

- Attend Family Gathering
- Visit a Historic Center
- Visit a Nature Center
- Visit a Beach
- Picnicking



Non Consumptive Moderates

About 14% of Wisconsinites 16 years and older (about 618,000 people) are characterized as “Non Consumptive Moderates.” This group represents the average person that is somewhat more involved in recreation than either the Inactives or Passives. Some members of this group participate in physically demanding activities such as mountain biking and snorkeling. Activities not favored by this group include hunting, fishing, and off-road driving.

Primary Non Consumptive Moderates Activities:

- Visit a Beach
- Visit a Nature Center
- Day Hiking
- Swimming
- Mountain Biking
- Camping
- Downhill Skiing
- Picnicking



Nature Lovers

About 16% of Wisconsinites 16 years and older (about 716,000 people) are characterized as “Nature Lovers.” This group enjoys viewing and photographing nature—whether it is wildlife, flowers, birds, or natural scenery—and are almost twice as likely as the average person to participate in these activities. This group also enjoys visiting nature centers and historic sites. They are generally more of a passive group, choosing to drive for pleasure rather than hike or backpack into a natural setting. Nature Lovers participate in limited amounts of hunting, fishing, active sports, and muscle powered activities, but these activities are not their primary passion.

Primary Nature Lovers Activities:

- Viewing/Photographing Nature
- Walk for Pleasure
- Drive for Pleasure
- Sightseeing
- Learning/Visiting a nature center
- Attend a Family Gathering



Active Nature Watchers

About 16% of Wisconsinites 16 years and older (about 716,000 people) are characterized as “Active Nature Watchers.” Members of this group enjoy viewing and photographing nature and are twice as likely to participate in these activities than the average person. Though very similar to the Nature Lovers group, Active Nature Watchers are generally more active as they hike or backpack into natural settings and areas to view wildlife or natural scenery. Members of this group also enjoy water-based activities but prefer to arrive at their viewing destination by human power.

Primary Active Nature Watchers Activities:

- Viewing/Photographing Nature
- Learning/Visiting a Nature Center
- Walking
- Day Hiking
- Cross-Country Skiing
- Swimming
- Kayaking
- Visit a Historic Site



Water Bug

About 8% of Wisconsinites 16 years and older (about 362,000 people) are characterized as “Water Bugs.” This group is one of the most energetic of market segments, participating in many water sports and some snow activities. Members of this group participate in water-based activities twice as often as the average person.

Primary Water Bug Activities:

- Visit a Beach
- Visit a Water Park
- Swimming
- Boating (all types)
- Drive for Pleasure
- Picnicking
- Learning/Visiting a Nature Center
- Downhill Skiing



Motorized Consumptives (Hunt and Fish)

About 7% of Wisconsinites 16 years and older (about 304,000 people) are characterized as “Motorized Consumptives.” Across all market segments, this group has the highest participation rates for hunting and fishing with members four times more likely to hunt and three times more likely to fish than the average person. Rates of participation in physically demanding activities, however, are relatively low among members of this group with members preferring consumptive activities (hunting and fishing) and motorized activities to human-powered activities.

Primary Motorized Consumptives (Hunt and Fish) Activities:

- Hunting
- Motorboating
- Snowmobiling
- Fishing
- Driving Off-Road
- Horseback Riding
- Camping
- Gathering Mushrooms, Berries, etc.



Enthusiasts

About 8% of Wisconsinites 16 years and older (about 362,000 people) are what we choose to call “Enthusiasts.” Of all market segments, enthusiasts are the most active and participate in the broadest array of activities. Members of this group are two to six times more likely to participate in certain activities than most other Americans. Enthusiasts also enjoy activities that are physically challenging and require high levels of skill and endurance.

Primary Enthusiasts Activities:

- Cross-Country Skiing
- Kayaking
- Snowboarding
- Mountain Biking
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Sailing
- Rowing

Wisconsin SCORP Regions

Another way to understand recreational uses and preferences is by geographical boundary. For this plan, Wisconsin has been divided into eight SCORP planning regions. These regions reflect a somewhat loose correlation to tourism and recreation markets, but also indicate a division in the landscapes and environments which lend themselves to different types of outdoor recreation experiences. Recreation participation rates for these regions are presented in Chapter Five.

Regional differences in outdoor recreation demand do exist within Wisconsin. These differences can be attributed to three common themes: supply of an available recreation resource, urban vs. rural populations, and access to an available recreation resource. A difference in any one of these categories will result in a different recreation demand for a given area.

For example, off-road driving with an ATV is very popular in regions of the state where there is an abun-

dant supply of ATV trails, undeveloped land, and a predominantly rural population. As Figure 2-2 illustrates, the more northerly, predominantly rural regions (Great Northwest, Northwoods, Upper Lake Michigan Coastal, Mississippi River Corridor, Western Sands, and Lake Winnebago Waters) do, in fact, have the highest participation rates for ATVing. In regions that are more urban—the Lower Lake Michigan Coastal and Southern Gateways Regions—there is less undeveloped land, less available ATV trails, and therefore less participation in ATVing.

Dog parks, by contrast, are often popular in more developed urban settings. As Figure 2-3 illustrates, dog parks are most popular in the Lower Lake Michigan Coastal and Southern Gateways Regions (the most urban regions of the state) and least popular in the Great Northwest and Northwoods Regions (the most rural of all Wisconsin regions).

Figure 2-2: Off-Road Driving with an ATV – Use Across SCORP Regions

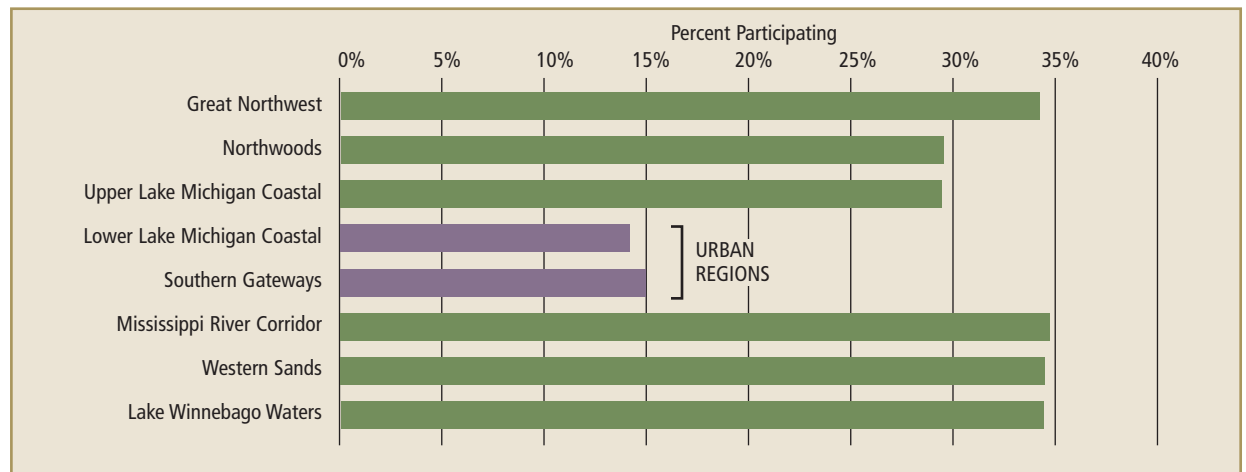
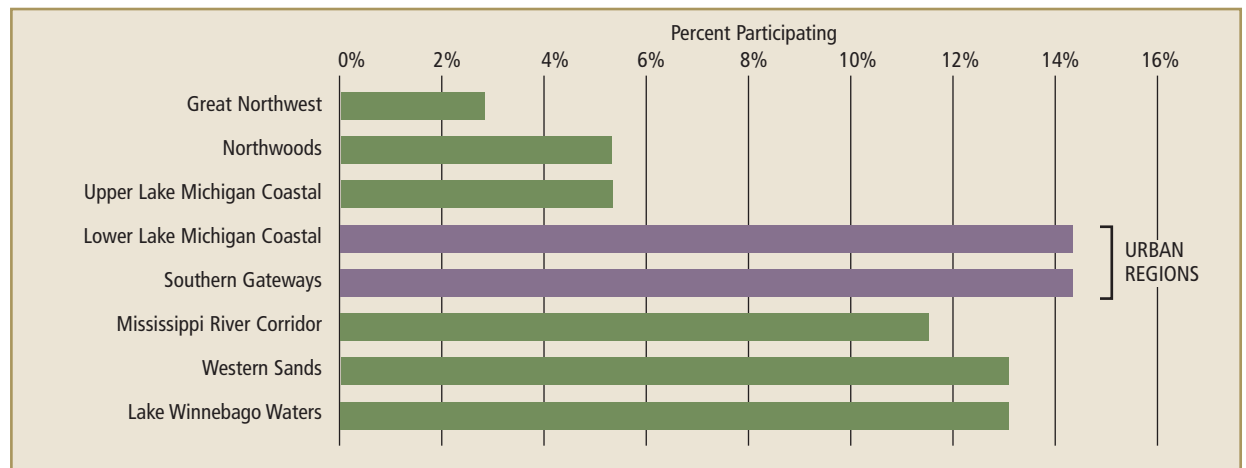


Figure 2-3: Dog Park Usage Across SCORP Regions



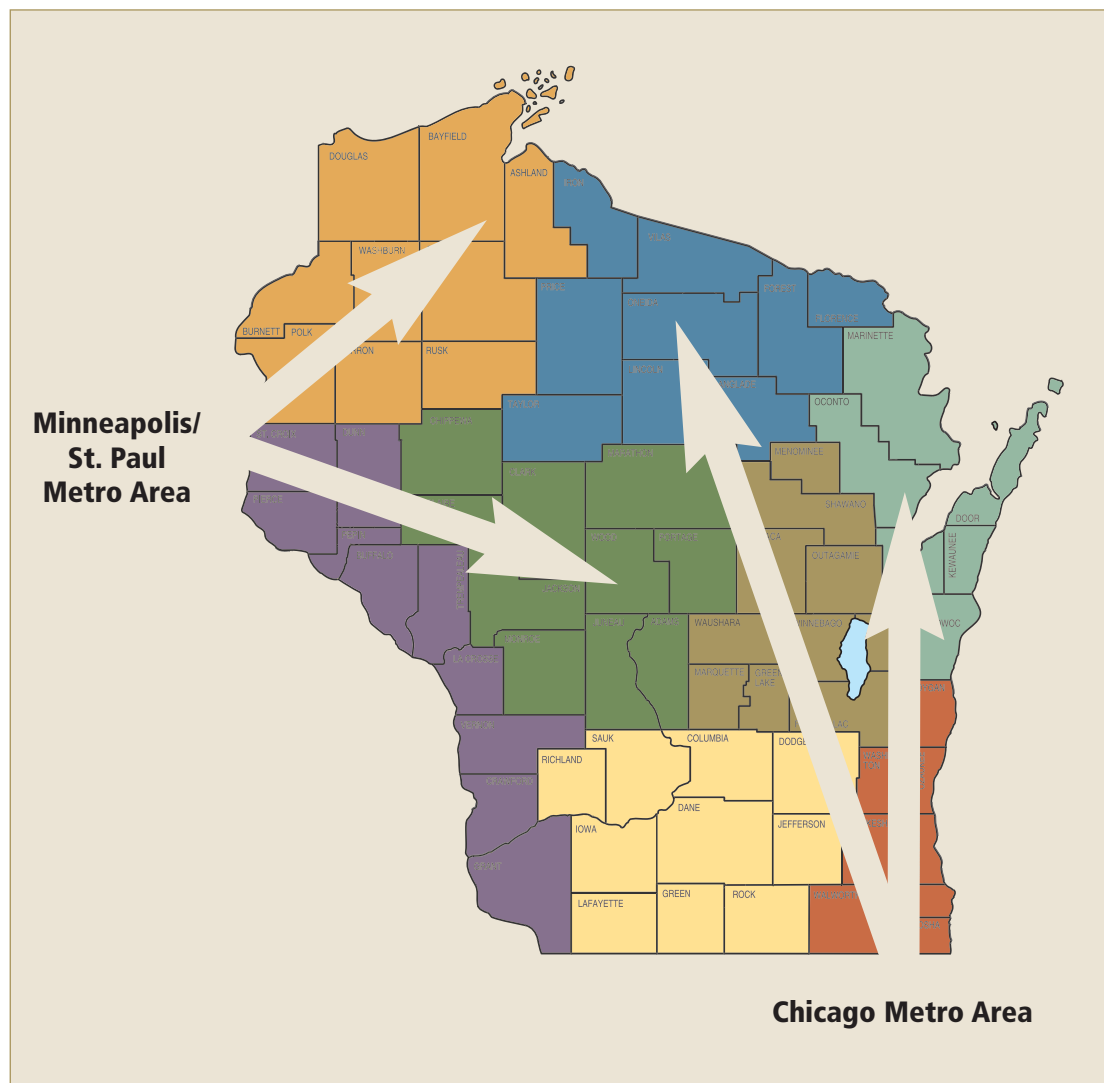
Recreation Demand from Outside of Wisconsin

Although recreation demand in Wisconsin is largely determined by the activities and preferences of Wisconsin residents, out-of-state visitors also influence it. While past SCORPs have not addressed this issue, this SCORP attempts to classify the recreational profile of out-of-state visitors by assessing the recreational preferences of non-Wisconsin residents. Understanding this demand will ultimately lead to a more comprehensive view of recreation across Wisconsin.

For this process, two Direct Marketing Areas (DMAs), Chicago, Illinois and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, were examined. Two datasets were used for this analysis: The Department of Tourism Wave VIII Report (See Appendix C) and the NSRE Recreation

Statistics Update Number 9, which looked at nature-based outdoor recreation activities. These two data sets were merged to estimate the number of non-resident recreational users that come to Wisconsin over the course of a year. This merging of datasets does have limitations. The NSRE data is based on recreation participation within the past year, while the Department of Tourism data is based on participation rates from the past three years. To account for these differences, this SCORP averaged the number of NRSE and WAVE VIII participants to give an approximate number of outside users on a yearly basis. Figure 2-4 shows the general migration pattern of DMA residents into the State of Wisconsin. It is no surprise that travel patterns show large portions of these DMAs traveling to the northern or eastern portions of the state—areas that are rich in

Figure 2-4: Recreation Demand from Outside of Wisconsin





It is no surprise that travel patterns show many out-of-state visitors travelling to the northern or eastern portions of the state—those areas that are rich in recreational resources and are geographically close to the Twin Cities or Chicago metropolitan areas.

recreational resources and are geographically close to the Twin Cities or Chicago metropolitan areas, respectively. It is surprising, however, that more visitors do not travel to the southwest corner of the state. This regional deficit may be due to the different types of landscapes (fewer lakes, more farmlands, etc.) and the possible lack of recreation supply resources within this region.

Table 2-9 lists the 21 nature-based activities used in the NSRE study and gives an estimate of participation in these activities for each DMA. Again, it must be stressed that DMA participation rates are estimates; more work is needed to understand the travel and recreation use patterns for out-of-state recreation demand.

Table 2-9: **Estimated Yearly Number of Chicago and Twin City DMA Users Participating in Selected Wisconsin Activities (Age 16+)**

Activity	Number of Participants (1,000s)		
	Chicago*	Twin Cities*	Total
Sightseeing	832	283	1,115
Picnicking	651	233	884
View/photograph wildlife	494	214	708
Swimming in lakes and streams	470	195	665
View photograph birds	386	164	550
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	370	153	523
Day hiking	374	149	523
Developed camping	300	120	420
Mountain biking	301	126	427
Canoeing	229	84	313
Backpacking	205	46	251
Rafting	199	42	241
Warmwater fishing	147	77	224
Drive off-road	145	76	221
Downhill skiing	133	57	190
Primitive camping	120	69	189
Horseback riding on trails	84	34	118
Cross-country skiing	48	61	109
Cold water fishing	19	13	32
Big game hunting	14	18	32
Small game hunting	4	3	7

* Combined, approximately 11.3 million total people reside in the Chicago and Twin Cities DMAs.

Status of Health Indicators

No matter what recreation experience, setting, or activity people prefer, one thing is clear: physical activity is important to overall health and wellbeing. Over the course of the past few decades, national overweight and obesity rates have increased dramatically. Today more than 60% of adults over the age of 20 are overweight or obese and over 30% of children ages 6-19 are overweight or at risk of becoming so. In Wisconsin we are not immune to this trend. Data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that 61% of all Wisconsin adults are overweight or obese while 24% of Wisconsin high school students are overweight or at risk of becoming so.

Table 2-10: **Average Wisconsin Statewide Health Indicators and Goals**

	Obese/ Overweight ¹	Physical Activity ²	Heart Death ³
Statewide Average	61%	13.80%	169.86
2010 CDC Goal	15%	30%	N/A
Outside of Target Goal	46%	16.20%	

¹ Obese/Overweight percent of adults who are obese and/or overweight based on body mass index (BMI)

² Adults 18+ who exercise 20 minutes or more at 50% of aerobic capacity 3 or more times per week

³ Mortality due to coronary heart disease rates per 100,000 people. Age adjusted to year 2000 standard population.

The costs of this epidemic are immense both in terms of taxpayer money and personal health. Obesity is implicated in a number of diseases such as type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke, all of which contribute to shortened life expectancies and higher costs of medical care. In addition to these direct costs, obesity also costs taxpayers indirectly in the form of increased Medicare and Medicaid costs. All factors considered, the obesity epidemic is expected to cost the American public over \$117 billion by the year 2020.

Physical activity is one of the most important factors in controlling obesity, yet as many as 60% of adults and 30% of children do not get enough exercise. To combat this trend, the CDC has established 2010 health goals that aim to increase the percentage of children, adolescents, and adults who regularly engage in some form of physical activity. With their miles of easily accessible trails, rivers, and forest, Wisconsin state and local parks and recreation areas play an integral role in promoting activity among state citizens. Recreational activities such as hiking, biking, canoeing, and skiing are all fun, easy ways of achieving the regular exercise key to maintaining a healthy body.



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Recreation Barriers within Wisconsin

Given the health benefits of regular physical activity, the relative inactivity of the Wisconsin population is a troubling trend. In order to encourage increased physical activity among Wisconsinites, however, we must first understand the barriers that prevent Wisconsinites from being, or becoming, regularly physically active. Understanding these barriers and creating strategies to overcome them may help Wisconsinites make physical activity more a part of their daily lives. As part of this SCORP, approximately 1,300 residents were surveyed and asked which barriers caused them to not recreate as often as they would have liked. This question was open-ended, allowing respondents to provide up to three different barriers. Responses gathered were then divided into two categories: personal and environmental barriers. These barriers are discussed below.



The relative inactivity of the Wisconsin population is a troubling trend.

Personal Barriers

Aside from the many technological advances and conveniences that have made our lives less active, many personal variables, including physiological, behavioral, and psychological factors may affect our plans to become more physically active. Table 2-11 lists the most common personal barriers to increased activity/outdoor recreation. These responses reflect a society that is becoming increasingly busy with job and family commitments. Responses also reflect the constraint of age, a constraint that is becoming an increasing factor for Wisconsin's large baby boomer population.

Table 2-11: **Personal Barriers for Increased Physical Activity/Outdoor Recreation in Order of Importance**

1. Lack of time
2. Family commitments
3. Job/work
4. Crowding
5. Conflicts with motorized uses
6. Cost
7. Age
8. Fuel prices

Environmental Barriers

Social environments such as school, work, family, and friends can significantly influence an individual's level of physical activity. Characteristics of our communities, however, may play an even greater role. The relative accessibility and location of parks, trails, sidewalks, and recreational centers, as well as the design of streets, the density of housing, and the availability of public transit all act to promote or discourage an individual or family's level of physical activity. Significant environmental barriers such as water and air pollution, crime, and dangerous automobile traffic also impact physical activity within a region. Table 2-12 lists several environmental barriers to increased outdoor recreation. These responses indicate the constraints of distance, lack of developed facilities, and a lack of information on local recreation opportunities.

Table 2-12: **Environmental Barriers for Increased Physical Activity/Outdoor Recreation in Order of Importance**

1. Distance/travel time
2. Lack of access to public lands
3. Lack of information about where to go
4. Not enough campsites/electric sites
5. Noise from ATVs and other motorized uses
6. Lack of bike trails
7. Lack of public transportation
8. Lack of snow

Accessibility Recreation Considerations

This SCORP intends to assess and improve recreation for all recreational participants. One group that has often been overlooked in recreational planning has been those with mobility disabilities. Although accessibility to recreational resources has increased for disabled persons—a result of both continued lobbying by public interest groups and the passage of legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—there has been little research exploring the outdoor recreation participation patterns of people with disabilities. To establish a general understanding of the supply and demand of recreation for disabled persons, the WDNR evaluated several studies conducted by the NSRE. These studies, though not specific to Wisconsin, posed questions about disability and disabled constraints, information that may aid recreation planners and managers in determining what services and accommodations are needed to provide a better outdoor recreation experience for disabled participants.

As reported in the 2000 census, Wisconsin has 790,917 disabled persons, a number that represents 14% of the overall state population. Among residents 65 and older, 36.5% are classified as disabled. As Wisconsin's large baby boomer population continues to age, the demand for disabled recreation facilities is also expected to increase. Developing methods of estimating this demand will therefore become increasingly important in the planning and development of recreational facilities.

In the NRSE data, the characteristics of activities that influenced recreation participation rates of disabled people included: (a) the physical nature of activities, (b)

the degree of adaptation needed for participation, (c) the social expectations, self perceptions, and social fears associated with certain activities, (d) the financial costs of activities, and (e) the accessibility of sites where activities took place.

From this work, 15 recreation uses were determined to have average or above average participation rates among mobility disabled individuals. These uses are listed in Table 2-13. For the most part, these activities are nature-based, requiring a more natural/undeveloped setting. Viewing and learning activities are also popular within this population segment.

Table 2-13: **Average or Above Average Participation Rates (Controlling for Age) for Those with Mobility Disabilities (in alphabetical order)**

Attend concerts
Backpacking
Birdwatching
Camping
Canoeing
Drive off-road
Fishing
Horseback riding
Nature study
Sightseeing
Sledding
View fish
Visiting historic/archeology sites
Visiting nature centers
Wildlife viewing



The demand for disabled recreation facilities is expected to increase with Wisconsin's aging population.



Given the barriers already limiting recreation participation, it is important that recreational facilities and services provide users with as high quality an experience as possible.

The NRSE data also examined the barriers preventing those with disabilities from recreating more often. Table 2-14 lists the top constraints to recreation participation among mobility disabled participants. For the most part, these barriers are no different than those for the general population. Like any outdoor recreation user, disabled participants face constraints of time, money, and outdoor pests. Disabled users, however, may also face constraints in a lack of companions.

Table 2-14: **Top Constraints to Participation in Favorite Outdoor Recreation Activities by Those with Mobility Disabilities**

1. No companions
2. Not enough money
3. Not enough time
4. Outdoor pests
5. Personal health

Quality of Wisconsin Recreation Services and Facilities

Given the barriers already limiting recreation participation, it is important that recreational facilities and services provide users with as high quality an experience as possible. To evaluate the quality of these services and facilities in Wisconsin, this SCORP used a variety of survey methods and other sources. A Recreation Quality Index (RQI) was developed in a similar fashion to that used in the 2000-05 SCORP.

Recreational Quality Index

The RQI is a measure of three outdoor recreation components—opportunity, participation, and satisfaction. This index is derived by scoring survey questions numerically for each component, then summing these components into an overall score. A higher score indicates a more positive recreation experience while a lower score indicates a less positive recreation experience. Table 2-15 compares the 1998 RQI score with that from 2005. Over this seven year time period, the score has gained six points. The component which increased the most over this period was the satisfaction score, a gain which may be attributed to Wisconsin's stewardship programs. These programs have continued to acquire, develop, and improve the recreational facilities and lands that provide visitors with a positive park experience. Even though outdoor recreational opportunities have increased since the last SCORP, most users believe that this component can still improve. Unlike the other two components, participation has declined since the last SCORP. This decline may reflect the increasing difficulty of recreating in today's society. Barriers to recreation include lack of time, work obligations, and travel distance to a preferred recreation experience.

Table 2-15: **Recreation Quality Index Comparisons 1998 vs. 2005**

Year	Overall	Opportunity	Participation	Satisfaction
1998	94	30	30	34
2005	100	34	27	39

Summary

As society continues to change and evolve, so too does outdoor recreation participation. Recreational participation reflects many elements: recreation preferences, the diversity of the Wisconsin population, the variety of recreation landscapes available throughout the state, and the increasing barriers placed upon the average recreationalist. Taken as a whole, these factors contribute to a diverse range of recreational activity preferences and demands throughout the state. As recreation providers attempt to accommodate these various needs, proactive planning will become increasingly important to ensure that recreation in Wisconsin remains accessible and adapted to the needs of the state's population.



Proactive planning will become increasingly important to ensure that recreation in Wisconsin remains accessible and adapted to the needs of the state's population.